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F O S T E R   C A R E   O F   C H I L D R E N

in

GREENSBORO - GUILFORD COUNTY

NORTH CAROLINA

A   S T U D Y

Conducted by the

Case Work Division

of the

Council of Social Agencies

Greensboro, North Carolina

1949

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## INTRODUCTION

In the Spring of 1948 a special committee of the Casework Division of the Council of Social Agencies made a study of some unmet needs of children in Greensboro. This study was later issued under the title "Looking Toward the Horizon". Among the recommendations of this committee were the following:

1. Determine further the existing need for homemaker service and investigate ways and means of making this service possible. It is recommended that it be considered not only as a service for indigent families, but also on a commercial basis.
2. Make a study of the present program, functions, policies and resources of the existing agencies which render financial assistance for basic maintenance. This study should determine whether or not there is a need for expanding and making more adequate the present programs.
3. Stimulate the development of boarding homes for children; emphasis to be put on suitable placement for children in temporary emergency situations which require boarding home care.
4. Explore resources for suitable nursing homes for handicapped children.

At the beginning of the Council year 1948-49 the Case Work Division took action on these recommendations by setting up a special committee to consider the establishment of a Homemaker Service and the report of this committee is given in part VI. In reference to recommendation 2 the Casework Division was of the opinion that the already existing committee of Inter-Agency Relationships could handle the problem as presented in this recommendation. In relation to recommendations 3 and 4 the Casework Division set up a committee on The Foster Care of Children with the recommendation that this committee follow up the recommendations as presented in the study of 1948

## I.

## COMMITTEE - MEMBERSHIP and AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY - DEFINITION of TERMS

The Committee on Foster Care of Children had as its chairman Mrs.

Rosella McLain of the Guilford County Dept. of Welfare. The membership of the committee was as follows:

Mrs. A.C.Bergeron - Teacher - Sternberger Hospital  
Miss Beattie Young - Children's Home Society  
Mrs. Ruth Hartman - Family Service Agency  
Miss Catherine Layton - City Health Dept.  
Mrs. Carolyn Maness - American Red Cross  
Joseph P. Shore - Clerk of the Superior Court  
Bruce Thorburn - Probation Officer - County Children's Court  
Mrs. Blanche Carr Sterne - Supt. Dept. of Public Welfare  
John Clay - State Veterans Com.  
Mrs. B. W. Barnes - Pres. Susie B. Dudley Y.W.C.A.  
Mrs. Caroline Otcy - Dept. Public Welfare  
Miss Margaret Edwards - Dept. Home Economics - W.C.U.N.C.  
Miss Elizabeth Andrews - Matron - Rest Cottage

At the first meeting the committee outlined its areas of responsibility as being an all over study of Foster Care Facilities for Children exclusive of institutional facilities. This included the study of the of the Foster Home program both for long time and temporary placement, the program of Day Care of Children and provisions made for either Day Care or 24 Hour Foster Home Care of exceptional children. It was agreed that the work of the committee would be broken down into five sub committees as follows:

- 1- Committee on Day Care of Children
- 2- Committee on Foster Care of Handicapped Children
- 3- Committee on Standards of Foster Home Care
- 4- Committee on Foster Home Rates
- 5- Committee on Foster Home Finding.

## Definition of Terms

Foster Care- A term used to designate the care of children reared away from the natural family.

Foster Home Care - Full-time care of children away from the natural family but in a substitute family setting. Foster Homes may be divided as follows:

Boarding Home One in which a family receives payment for a child's care. These homes are by law subject to license by the State Board of Public Welfare. (General Statutes Chap. 108 Art. 1 #108-3 Par 4 and 5)

Free Home One in which no money is paid for the care of a child and no arrangement is made to obtain services from the child in return for his maintenance.

Adoptive Home Is a free home in which the child is placed with the definite expectation of legal adoption.

Work Home One in which child is placed through a specific arrangement whereby board and lodging are to be exchanged for service from the child.

Wage Home One in which wages are paid in addition to board and lodging.

Day Care - Care of children during some part of the day either in group facilities or in private family homes

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

Committee on Day Care of Children

The committee on Day Care of Children had for its chairman Miss Mary Pitt, Director of the Caldwell Nursery School. The membership of the Committee was as follows:

Elwood Waddell - A & T College - Housing Project Mgr.  
Miss Nettie Nash - A & T College - Nursery School  
Mrs. Marie Waynick - Central Nursery School  
Mrs. Grace Lewis - Sampson St. Nursery  
Mrs. Edwin Booth - Church of the Covenant  
Miss Eugenia Hunter - Curry Nursery School - Woman's College, U.N.C.  
Miss Lucy Pell - First Presbyterian Church  
Miss Ruth Steelman - Teacher - High Point College  
Miss Elsie Love - Nursery School - Senior High School

This committee has brought together most of the professionals in the community interested in the problems of Day Care of Children and also those actually operating some type of Day Care facility. The committee took its charge to be a study of the existing provisions for Day Care of Children, and to analyze the need for day care and to plan ways of meeting unmet needs. In approaching this charge the committee was quick to recognize that the program which had been outlined could not be accomplished in a short period of time. The suggested approach to the problem is as follows:

- 1- Publication of a directory of day care facilities with information on ages served, fees, etc. This project has actually been undertaken under the direction of Miss Mereb Mossman, Prof. of Sociology at Woman's College using students in the Department of Sociology. It is expected that this directory will be published in June 1949.
- 2- A study to determine the needs for Day Care not now being met and why they are not being met. This study will be done thru simple analysis of pre-school population. The preliminary discussions of the committee have already indicated a need for the expansion of facilities for the Day Care of Negro Children.

The committee recommends that this study of day care facilities be continued as a regular committee of the Casework Division of the Council of

## III

## COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

"North Carolina has long stressed the welfare of children. Pioneering in some fields, building upon varied experience in others, the emphasis has been upon opportunity for full development of all children. This has been coupled with a keen realization of the State's responsibility for the adequate protection of its younger citizens. To achieve such broad ends, it is essential that the State, the Counties, and the communities provide individually and cooperatively many resources for services to children." This statement by Dr. Ellen Winston, Commissioner of the N. C. State Board of Public Welfare is from the introduction of the "Manual for Work with Children" issued by the Division of Child Welfare of the State Board. This clearly establishes recognition by the State of public responsibility for the care and protection of children. In practice the program of child welfare services of the Department of Public Welfare must be the keystone of the whole child welfare program in this community.

The development of a specific child welfare program in Guilford County is of recent origin. According to a study made by the State Planning Board in 1946-47 "Some Assets and Liabilities - Greensboro-High Point - Guilford County" the "Child Welfare program in Guilford County is definitely limited by virtue of the fact that the County Dept. of Public Welfare has no child welfare case worker. To be sure members of the casework staff service many children's cases but their work with these children is limited in effectiveness because of the number of other cases for which each worker is responsible". Subsequent to this in September of 1947 the Guilford County Dept. of Public Welfare put on its staff one trained and experienced child welfare worker. In the late fall of 1948 the Department took on another partially trained and experienced child welfare

worker so that at the present time the Department has in the Greensboro office two workers specifically charged with responsibility for child welfare services. In addition to this various other staff members of the Department carry child welfare service cases. There is no negro child welfare worker and the two negro case workers in the Department, who handle the regular public assistance case load also give service to the Child Welfare program.

In the same State Planning Board Report the observation was made that "The Boarding Home Program is anything but adequate. There are only eight licensed homes with facilities for a total of 27 children in the entire county. Moreover, there are no licensed boarding homes for negro children. Several unlicensed boarding homes are in use. There should be sufficient licensed boarding homes to provide temporary care for all children, white and negro, who need such care".

Some improvement has been made in the development of a boarding home program since that time. The County Dept. of Public Welfare has at the present time 11 licensed boarding homes with accommodations for 31 children. There are no licensed boarding homes to care for negro children. There is, however, one license pending which home will care for 2 negro children. There are 5 new homes which will be licensed by July 1949, including 2 homes for negro children. (Mrs. Blanche Carr Sterne, Supt. of Public Welfare)

The whole question of the size of case loads in a child welfare program has been the subject of many studies. The Department of Public Welfare of the City of Chicago conducted a study of the case load problem in February 1948. They approached the problem from a time angle and found that in order to improve quality of service to children smaller case loads had to be planned. During the study it was found that in 70% of their cases there was a triangular relationship involved. To help one child the worker had to deal



with the child, the parents and the foster parents. If the child was not in a foster home the triangle usually included the school or some other agency already working with the child or his family. The important point here is that in a case load of 50 children this number might be trebled to represent the persons involved and taking the time of a case worker. The end result of the study was that a reasonable case load would be 31 children's cases.

Efforts have been made in the Greensboro office of the Dept. of Public Welfare to reduce case loads. At this time one child welfare worker is carrying a case load of 67 cases besides supervising a student who carries 12 cases. The other child welfare worker has 52 cases. These figures are according to the April statistics.

In the official figures for March 1949 there were 316 children receiving services. Of this number 214 children were assigned to the 3 child welfare workers in the County, (one C.W. worker in High Point office) and 102 to other members of the staff. It should be pointed out that of the 275 children carried over from March and needing further service, 217 children were away from their own families. (See appendix) When children are away from their own families greater responsibility falls upon the agency and the case worker must expend more time and effort in planning for the child.

The Greensboro office of the Dept. of Public Welfare has one case work supervisor who supervises 14 case workers and one student. In this connection it should be noted that according to national standards it is desirable that not more than four or five case workers be assigned for supervision to a case supervisor.

It is interesting to compare our local statistics with those of other North Carolina Counties:

Mecklenberg County - Child Welfare program -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  supervisors;  $7\frac{1}{2}$  child

welfare case workers; 1 home finder; 1 registered nurse; average case load 45 cases. There are 65 licensed boarding homes with 110 children under care.

Forsythe County Child Welfare program - 1 supervisor, 4 child welfare case workers; average case load 125 cases; 46 licensed boarding homes with 100 children under care.

#### COMMITTEE ON STANDARDS OF FOSTER HOME CARE

The committee had as its chairman Mrs. T. L. McClellan, Executive Secretary of the Medical and Hospitalization Fund. The members of the committee were as follows:

Sam Fowler - County Dept. of Health  
 Mrs. Frances Thompson - Greensboro Juvenile Court  
 Mrs. Rosella McLain - Dept. of Public Welfare  
 Mrs. Carolyn Maness - American Red Cross  
 Joseph Shore - Clerk of Superior Court  
 Mrs. G. B. Evans

The committee considered its charge to include an evaluation of the requirements of the State Dept. of Public Welfare for licensing foster homes and an evaluation as to whether standards were deterring the finding of foster homes, whether they were any administrative bottle necks to the finding and licensing of foster homes, whether the local program was sufficiently staffed to meet the problem.

The committee made the following observation:

- 1- After carefully discussing the section of the State Dept. Child Welfare manual covering foster home care it was recommended that the State Dept. study its present procedure for licensing foster homes. The present procedure requires that the application be reviewed and approved by several staff persons so that there seems to be overlapping responsibilities and a lack of confidence in the ability of the child welfare worker to interpret State standards and license requirements.
- 2- Sanitary inspection. In reference to the sanitary inspection of rural homes required by State Law, it was generally felt that the County Board of Health had at times delayed the sanitary inspection of certain rural homes and in this manner had delayed the eventual issuance of licenses to these homes. It was recognized that this problem existed when the County Board of Health was without an ade-

quate staff of sanitarians. It was agreed that the County Board of Health should make prompt sanitary inspections when so requested by the Board of Public Welfare in order to expedite licensing of the home as quickly as possible.

- 3- Local administration - The question was raised as to the numerical adequacy of the present child welfare staff of the Dept. of Public Welfare. As previously indicated the Dept. of Public Welfare has in Greensboro 2 white child welfare workers and while the case loads of these workers have been reduced considerably there are still many child welfare cases that are being handled by other staff members who are already handling large public assistance case loads. The negro child welfare work is mainly handled thru the two regular negro staff members of the Dept. The committee recommended that a Child Welfare Division be set up within the Dept. of Public Welfare with a Child Welfare Supervisor and with sufficient staff to adequately service both the white and negro child welfare needs; that an effort be made to reduce the case loads to workable size; that consideration be given to having a full time home finder on the staff; that a study be made to determine whether the adoption work should not be placed in the hands of workers specifically designated to handle adoption cases.

## IV

## COMMITTEE REPORTS (continued)

Committee on Foster Home Finding

The committee on Foster Home Finding was under the chairmanship of Miss Gloria Watson of the Guilford County Dept. of Public Welfare. The committee members were:

Mrs. Ruth Hartman - Caseworker - Family Service Agency  
Mrs. Caroline Otey - Caseworker - Dept. Public Welfare  
Mr. John Clay - State Child Welfare Chairman - American Legion  
Rev. Paul Townsend - Grace Methodist Church  
Mrs. B.W. Barnes

This committee considered its charge to be to evaluate the needs for finding more foster homes, to evaluate our present foster home finding program and to assist in setting up a program for finding more foster homes.

As part of their work the committee made a study of the unmet needs for foster home care of children during 1948. The agencies cooperating in the survey were the Dept. of Public Welfare, The Greensboro Juvenile Court, The Guilford County Juvenile Court and the Greensboro Family Service Agency. The agencies were asked to review applications for Foster Home care made during the year January 1, 1948 to Dec. 31, 1948 and submit information on all applications where need for foster home care was indicated but could not be met. (See Figure I)

In analyzing the figures the committee took particular note of the following:

1- The relatively small number of negro families. It would appear that the negro community has more internal resources for handling their problems of foster care since they are not applying to the regular agencies in the community. It was thought that the negro family, needing day care, temporary care or long time care of dependent children had from long standing custom used neighborhood resources or family resources to a

emphasizes need for evaluating our Day Care program.)

4- Thirty-five children in 28 families needed care because of behavior problems. This indicates that our boarding home program must be geared to meet a variety of needs. For example the foster parent, who can assume the responsibility of children with behavior problems, are not too numerous and when found they must be carefully supervised and assisted.

As a result of this study the committee believed that there was need to set up a more intensive system of finding foster homes. In order to enlist community support for such projects the committee submitted to the Greensboro Junior League the suggestion that the League accept as a project, the financing of a full time home finder as a professional staff member of the Guilford County Dept. of Public Welfare. This project was turned down by the League because of lack of support from the interested agencies.

Subsequently, the matter was discussed at some length with the Supt. of the Dept. of Public Welfare. The Superintendent stated that the Department was moving as fast as possible at this time with their limited staff. She did not believe that it would be possible or likely that additional funds could be made available in her budget for the employment of a full time home finder. She did not believe that any whole sale publicity campaign should be put on at this time to secure foster homes since such a whole sale campaign would certainly over tax the staff available for quick follow up on such applications. She felt that the situation was developing in a satisfactory manner and that new homes were being secured. The Supt. agreed to review the matter in a few months time with the committee. The committee believes that there is real need for an extensive foster home program in the community as indicated by the survey.

## V.

## COMMITTEE ON BOARDING HOME RATES

The chairman of the committee on Boarding Home rates was Miss Beattie Young of the Children's Home Society. The members of the committee were as follows:

Mrs. W. J. Adams

Mrs. Margaret Street - Assoc. Professor Home Economics - Woman's College

Mrs. E. Harrison - Dept. of Public Welfare

The committee defined its area of responsibility to determine whether the present rates paid for foster home care were adequate for the development of a good program of foster home care. The present rates as paid according to the policies of the State Dept. of Public Welfare established Dec. 1946 are as follows:

Infants up to 2 yrs.	\$42.00 per mo.
Child 2 up to 6 yrs.	35.00 per mo.
Child 6 yrs and older	30.00 per mo.

When such rates are paid for foster home care the State Board of Public Welfare will participate up to 50% of the cost of approved cases, for boarding care of children in licensed homes. In addition to this basic board rate, which is to pay for room and board of the child, the Dept. of Public Welfare also pays for clothing, medical care, shoe repair, allowances or other extra expenses in the family.

Upon consideration of the extras the Agencies furnish the boarding families, such as clothing, medical care and medicine, the committee agreed that the board rate was not a deterring factor in finding boarding homes. The board rates paid in Guilford County were also compared to those given in the study made by the Child Welfare League of America. Board rates paid here fall well within the upper brackets of the study. It is the opinion of the committee that the rate of board paid in this County is not the cause of the shortage of boarding homes.

## VI

## COMMITTEE ON HOMEMAKER SERVICE

Homemaker service is a relatively new development in the field of child care. By homemaker service is meant the supervised placement by a case work agency of a trained woman in a home where her services are requested and needed to maintain and preserve the family as a unit. In general the service is used where the mother is for some reason absent from the home or, if present in the home, is unable to assume complete responsibility for the care of her children.

The committee on Homemaker Service met with private and public agencies in the community, with the local director of the State Employment Service, with representatives of the U.S. Children's Bureau, and the North Carolina State Board of Public Welfare. As a result of these meetings the committee are making the following recommendations:

- 1- That a Homemaker Service be established in Greensboro
- 2- That in order to take advantage of matching Federal funds thru the Child Welfare Services, this service should be started in the County Dept. of Public Welfare.
- 3- That the service should be available to applicants of all social agencies in Greensboro.
- 4- That the Homemaker Service committee should be continued as a regular committee of the Casework Division.

Mrs. A. Y. Preyer - Chairman  
Miss Lucy Monroe  
Miss Wilmot Doan  
Miss Gloria Watson  
Mr. Doyle McCool  
Mrs. J. Q. Sewell

## APPENDIX

## Monthly Report on Individual Children Receiving Services

County Guilford No \_\_\_\_\_

For month of March 1949

Section A. Children receiving Individual Service	Children in cases carried by child welfare workers	Children in cases carried by general case workers	Total
	I	II	
1. Continued from preceding mo. (item 6 preceding month)	201	94	295
2. Number for whom service was initiated during month (sum of items 2a and 2b)	13	8	21
a. New	13	8	21
b. Reopened			
3. Total under care during month (sum of items 1 and 2)	214	102	316
4. Terminated for service during Mo.	27	14	41
5. No. transferred between child Welfare workers and general case workers			
a. Transferred <u>from</u> Column I or II	4		
b. Transferred <u>to</u> Column I or II		4	
6. Continued to next month (sum of items 3 and 5b minus sum of items 4 and 5a)	183	92	275

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Section B. Location on last day of month	Children in cases carried by child wel- fare workers	Children in cases carried by general case workers		Total
		Not sharing in assistance grants	Sharing in as- sistance grants	
	I	II	III	
7. Continued to next mo. (same as item 6 and sum of items 7 a-i	183	71	21	275
a. In parent's home	31	16	11	58
b. In other relative's home	21	4	9	34
c. In boarding home	38	7	xxx	45
d. In adoptive home	60	17	xxx	77
e. In free foster home	20	7	xxx	27
f. In work or wage home			xxx	
g. In orphanage	5	11	xxx	16
h. In correctional insti- tution	5	3	xxx	8
i. Elsewhere (sum of (1) - (7)	3	6	1	9
(1) Hospital	1	1	1	
(2) School for mentally deficient				
(3) School for physically handicapped				
(4) Boarding school	1	3		
(5) County home				
(6) Maternity home				
(7) Other	1	1		
Section C Number of blue cards continued to next month	7			